

A section of the iron fence of the capital's Ramna Park lies in ruins after Hefajat-e Islam followers pulled it down in their attempts to reach and attack Gonojagoron Mancha in Shahabagh.

PHOTO: STAR



## No need of anti-hartal law

Says Dr Kamal  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

If laws on preventing destructive activities like killing and arson are properly enforced, an anti-hartal law will not be required, said Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday.

People do not want violent hartals instead of a functioning democracy, parliament and rule of law, he told a parliamentary debate, "Hartal should be banned through enacting law", organised by Debate for Democracy (DFD) in the capital's Bashundhara City.

"Although non-violent hartals were enforced in the country in the 60s, hartals have become violent recently," he said. Pointing out that government failures affect general public, he said, "Engaging in corruption while talking about the Liberation War's spirit does not mean anything."

He added that Gonojagoron Mancha should demand justice on all issues, says a press release.

DFD Chairman Hasan Ahmed Chowdhury Kiron said, "Hartal is a democratic right. But recent resistance to hartals made them violent. The time has come to find an alternative to hartal."

The opposition parties are not solely responsible for hartal violence and the government should be held accountable too. "General people are losing faith in political parties as some hartals are enforced with government patronisation," he said.

## JU teacher assaulted by BCL man

JU CORRESPONDENT

Jahangirnagar University teachers besieged the vice chancellor's residence on the campus last night protesting an earlier assault on a lecturer by a pro-Awami League Bangladesh Chhatra League leader of JU unit.

Hearing the news that JU pro-VC Prof Afsar Ahmed sustained injuries at Shahabagh, some JU Gonojagoron Mancha activists attacked Hefajat-e Islam men who were leaving Dhaka by bus after their long march rally around 9:00pm yesterday.

During that time, three Hefajat men were attacked. Later, the situation was brought under control with the help of JU proctorial body and police.

Meantime, the BCL men had an altercation with some teachers while they were trying to quell the untoward situation.

Later, Md Nurul Houque, lecturer of economics department and also JU syndicate member, was allegedly assaulted by one of the BCL leaders.

VC Prof Anwar Hossain assured the teachers that he would soon take legal action against those responsible for the incident.

Earlier, Gonojagoron Mancha activists blocked Dhaka-Aricha highway protesting Hefajat-e Islam's long march towards Dhaka.

## UNDP observing 1,000 days to MDG achievement target

Host of events organised in Bangladesh

BSS, Dhaka

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and its partners in Bangladesh are observing the milestone of 1,000 days to the end of 2015 -- the target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

From April 5 to 12, UN offices worldwide are working with governments, civil society and international partners to mark "MDG Momentum: 1,000 Days of Action" while UNDP in Bangladesh is organising events, competitions and a high level workshop.

Adopted by the UN member states in 2000, the eight time-bound MDGs address poverty and hunger, education, gender equality, child mortality, maternal health, combating AIDS, malaria and other diseases, environmental sustainability and a global partnership for development.

Bangladesh's poverty rate has nearly halved since 1992, coming down from 56.6 percent to 31.5 percent in 2010 and was well underway to meet the MDG target.

The under-five mortality rate plummeted from 146 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 50 per 1,000 live births in 2009.

Maternal mortality went down from 564 to 194 per 100,000 live births while the contraceptive prevalence rate, as of 2010, stands at 61.7 percent, up from 39.7 percent in 1990.

However, Bangladesh has struggled in areas of environmental sustainability, nutrition and certain aspects of gender equity.

"The MDGs are the most successful global anti-poverty push in history. The goals have helped set global and national priorities, mobilise action and achieve remarkable results," said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

## Transports go idle during hartal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Water, rail and road ways stayed shut to vehicles around the country during the 22-hour blockade and the 24-hour hartal enforced by pro-liberation forces from 6:00pm Friday.

The blockade and the hartal, called respectively by the Gonojagoron Mancha and 25 progressive organisations to resist Hefajat-e Islam's long march, passed successfully and peacefully.

In Sylhet, shops remained shut and the streets empty except few rickshaws and three-wheelers. After Friday morning, no buses left the city and so did trains after Friday night.

A procession of Gonojagoron Mancha was stopped by police while it was heading to the Court Point area where several thousand Hefajat activists were rallying. Jatiya Party and BNP supplied food and water to the Hefajat followers.

Meanwhile, Dhaka-Aricha Highway was blocked by Jahangirnagar University Gonojagoron Mancha.

From Friday evening, Bangladesh Chhatra League, Chhatra Union, Chhatra Front, Jahangirnagar Sangskritik Jote stayed at the two main gates of the university and prevented Hefajat activists from heading to Dhaka.

No inter-district buses left Chuadanga. In Narsingdi, freedom fighters blocked Dhaka-Sylhet highway.

The Kaorakandi-Mawa waterway, which connects the southern districts with Dhaka, was closed from yesterday morning, while no launches and buses left Chandpur, Munshiganj and Bagerhat.

Sammilito Sangskritik Jote brought out processions in Feni where Hefajat could not hold any programme after Friday evening.

## KARNAPHULI TUNNEL Construction to begin in few months

Says Hasan Mahmud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The construction work of a tunnel under the Karnaphuli river will start within a few months, said Environment and Forests Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud on Friday.

The minister stated that while addressing, as the chief guest, the concluding ceremony of the 21st Chittagong International Trade Fair (CITF) on Chittagong Polo Ground.

He also said Bangladesh is in the right track of development. The country has achieved over 6 percent GDP growth, despite the global recession.

Awami League lawmaker MA Latif stressed the need for building Mirsarai Industrial Park in Chittagong soon after the construction work of World Trade Centre in the port city completes.

Later, the first, second and third prizes for the Best Mini Pavillion was distributed among Hatil Complex Ltd, Unilever Bangladesh Ltd and Partex Furniture Industries Ltd respectively.

Bangaz Ltd, Buildcom and Pedrollo Ltd won the first, second and third prizes respectively in the booth category. RFL Plastics Ltd was declared the Best Manufacturer of the country.

## Ershad's dubious character exposed again

Says AL-led grand alliance

HASAN JAHIID TUSHER

The role of Jatiya Party chief HM Ershad in actively supporting Hefajat-e Islam's long march yesterday left its ally, the ruling Awami League, baffled and doubtful about his intention.

The AL-led grand alliance leaders think Ershad has once again uncovered his "dubious" character and they would have to think twice about him before the next election.

AL's allies think Ershad's siding with Hefajat will widen the existing gap between the AL and the JP and encourage the opposition BNP to take him on its side.

Ershad has said he supports the demands of Hefajat and demanded that the government stops the "atheists" of the Gonojagoron Mancha.

The AL thinks that the JP has gone politically bankrupt and thus trying to bank on religion-based organisations and that it would not be surprised even if Ershad

quits the grand alliance and joins the opposition in a "favourable" time.

"We never consider Ershad as a reliable friend," said Rashed Khan Menon, president of Workers' Party, a key member of the grand alliance.

He said Ershad was the first person to want Islamisation of the country through amending the constitution. So it is normal for him to support an Islamist organisation, he added.

AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif said the political parties which joined Hefajat's programme proved their bankruptcy.

"They [BNP and JP] have no political programmes themselves. By joining the religion-based organisation's programme, they proved themselves bankrupt."

Home Minister MK Alamgir said, "People can't accept any suggestion regarding democracy from an autocrat and expect honesty from a dishonest person."



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad addresses Hefajat-e Islam followers at Uttara in the capital yesterday. They were heading towards their rally in Motijheel.



Activists of the Gonojagoron Mancha of Chittagong bring out a procession holding lit torches in the port city yesterday reiterating the demand for banning Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Chhatra Shibir. The photo was taken from Jamal Khan area in the evening.

PHOTO: STAR

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